

## Essential Questions on Taoism

1. In *Lectures on the Tao Teh Ching*, Lao-Tzu says, that, "The mystery of the Mysterious is the gateway to all indescribable marvels". Does this quote have an equivalent to in Christianity? Are there other parts of the Tao Teh Ching that remind you of Christian ideals?

**I think what gateway is referring to is the door to afterlife. The most mysterious thing that human worries about is what would happen to him after he dies. Lao-Tzu was saying one would never know what would happen to one after death. This quote is not equivalent to Christianity for where they end up for Christians is not a mystery. They have a firm belief that they will end up in heaven to spend eternity.**

2. See Passage 2, "Not honoring men....Not wanting rare things...Not paying attention..." How are does this help one understand how Taoism, Buddhism and Confucianism found common ground and were not mutually exclusive belief systems?

**The basic message of all three is that people will not succeed in achieving anything with wrong motives or intention. If you want rare things to please yourself, robbery will increase. This belief is complementary in all three ideas of Taoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism in that people need to have right intention for their action.**

3. In Passage 2, what do you think is meant by the lines, "relaxing the mind, reinforcing the abdomen, gentling the will, strengthening the bones"?

**I think what really is meant by those lines is one would not gain anything by intensely trying to gain something. By relaxing the desirous mind and abandoning the will, things will come naturally. What is meant to come is determined that they will come naturally at the right time. Thus, there are things that cannot be achieved or gained by human efforts.**

4. Consider the last three entries from D.C. Lau's *Lao Tzu: Tao Te Ching*, Lao Tzu describes government. How is this ideal different from Confucius' ideal? What present day system of government are you reminded of when you read this section? Do you think this is a good system? Explain.

**The idealism of government differs from Confucius's ideal in that Lao claims that by having something bad, good will naturally be strengthened. For example, the more thieves and robbers are there the better known the laws and edicts. However, Confucius would say that those laws and edicts won't even be necessary on the first place if humans respected and followed the understood rules between people. This government reminds me**

**of anarchy. There is no rule or edict which forces the action of people. It just believes people will naturally govern themselves, if they are uncurbed from any regulations. I don't think it's a good system because for the corrupted society and people in the modern days, people need to have guidance and regulations to curb and check their actions. If they are free from any regulation, more crimes will occur, and people would start to forget what morality and ethics are.**

Regarding the third treasure that Lao Tzu describes, what do you think is his message? Do you agree? What does this say about people who are ambitious?

**I think what he meant in his message is that you cannot be courageous with wrong motivation. If you only desire to be courageous to achieve something for yourself, it will be worthless. The third treasure is not daring to lead the empire. What I think is meant in this message is that people have to respect you first for you to be the successful leader. By trying to lead the empire by the way you want it to be, it would prove to be a failure. If you humble yourself, the respect from people will come naturally and in that way you could be a successful leader.**